WORLD CHRONICLE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PROGRAMME: **"WORLD CHRONICLE"**

GUEST: Ambassador Rolf Ekeus, Executive Chairman of the Special Commission

JOURNALISTS: Bhaskar Menon, PTI-TV, India

Evelyn Leopold, Reuters Information Service

Evgueni Menkes, TASS

MODERATOR: Michael Littlejohns

SYNOPSIS

SPECIAL COMMISSION ON IRAQ

Security Council Resolution 687 calls for the establishment of a Special Commission to oversee the elimination of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction and the means of their production. Ambassador Rolf Ekeus, Executive Chairman of the Commission discusses the ongoing work of the Commission in carrying out its mandate.

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VOICE: From United Nations Headquarters in New York, this is **WORLD CHRONICLE**, an unedited interview programme about major global issues. Here now to introduce our guest is the host of today's **WORLD CHRONICLE**.

LITTLEJOHNS: I'm Michael Littlejohns and this is **WORLD CHRONICLE**.

One of the most important initiatives of the United Nations in the aftermath of the Gulf War, has been the establishment of a Special Commission to oversee the elimination of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction. Created by Security Council Resolution 687, the Special Commission has dispatched a series of inspection teams to ensure the termination of Baghdad's nuclear, ballistic, chemical and biological capability. It is an undertaking that has attracted a great deal of international attention.

Our guest today heads this unique operation. He is Ambassador Rolf Ekeus, Executive Chairman of the Special Commission. A national of Sweden, Ambassador Ekeus will be interviewed here at United Nations headquarters in New York by: Bhaskar Menon of PTI-TV of India; Evelyn Leopold of Reuters ; and Evgueni Menkes of TASS.

Before we begin our discussion with Ambassador Ekeus, let's look at the Commission's efforts to identify and destroy Iraq's chemical weapons capability. Our correspondent Steve Whitehouse reports:

WHITEHOUSE: The UN inspectors prepare themselves for an eventuality they hope will never happen.

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emergency procedures. They are part of a 50-man chemical team making an inventory of Iraq's chemical warfare capability. It's just one element of the country's weapons of mass destruction ordered destroyed by the UN Security Council.

On-site medical technology is as sophisticated as the best possible emergency ward, and the realization that this is no exercise.

DR. NIGEL MURRAY: "The big difference is this is real. There are real agents and people can die from them very easily".

WHITEHOUSE: Some 300 tons of chemicals used in the production of nerve and mustard gas have been declared and the facility, a vast complex of laboratories, bunkers and warehouses containing thousands of barrels of often unknown chemicals.

Wind direction is continually monitored as a unit of Australian and Canadian inspectors return to a safe area from a preliminary check of a storage building.

The inspectors have also been rehearsing decontamination techniques for in coming weeks they'll be donning chemical warfare suits for the potentially hazardous job of taking precise samples of the chemicals themselves. They're all too aware that even one drop could be fatal.

With inspectors coming from 15 different countries the safety chief ensures that everyone is trained to follow exactly the same procedure. The UN team says working relations with the Iraqis have been good.

MARIUS VAN ZELM: "So far they have been cooperative, yes. I'm not complaining. The questions that we've asked have been answered satisfactorily and I hope it will stay that way during the rest of our mission".

WHITEHOUSE: Elsewhere on the complex, bombs designed to carry mustard gas now useless, crushed by a bulldozer during a previous UN inspection mission.

LITTLEJOHNS: Ambassador Ekeus, although this tape we've just seen tells us that the Iraqis have been cooperative, you said not very long ago that they had been distinctly uncooperative in several key areas and there was a great deal of non-compliance with the Security Council resolutions. Has the situation changed?

EKEUS: Well, not much. We can concur with the statement that the experts on the Iraqi side cooperate reasonably well on the ground when our inspectors are carrying out their task which is, of course, not only to inspect but also now to enter into the destruction phase. But as soon as we enter what one could consider militarily and politically sensitive areas, we have a feeling of a very distinct, non-cooperative attitude. I'm saying that now with quite a long experience of our work. However, I'm

also an optimist. I hope that they may start to change their attitude.

LITTLEJOHNS: Ambassador Ekeus, you told us not very long ago also that it would probably be well into 1993 before you've completed the task of destroying the chemical arsenals of the Iraqis. Is that still your best estimate?

EKEUS: Yes, I probably said it was an optimistic estimate because Iraq has, we had detected something like 46,000 pieces of filled chemical munition and there is an enormous amount more -- 79,000 something -- unfilled chemical munitions. The unfilled is quite easy to handle, it's a simple mechanical destruction activity. But dealing with the filled munition, when we talk about filled, that is mustard gas, nerve gas and some tear gas we had in mind, it's very tricky work. And there you have to drill and drain each piece of munition very carefully, take care of the nerve agent or mustard in it which is a very complex and dangerous task also, so it is time consuming. So I could very well also say early '94.

LITTLEJOHNS: Speaking of cooperation, there must have been a great deal of cooperation with the Iraqis by foreign governments and companies for them to have developed such a sophisticated arsenal of weapons. When is your Special Commission going to identify some of these collaborators, both governmental and private?

EKEUS: We are in the process of identifying such suppliers or sources. What we do is that we asked our chief inspectors to assemble a list and make notes of what they find on the ground when they are carrying out their task and provide ourselves -- that's on the nuclear areas -- and Dr. Blix of IAEA,

with the information and then we agreed for the provisional policy, Dr. Blix and myself, that we give out such data all ready now, to the governments that ask with regard to their own countries or directly related to their own countries.

LITTLEJOHNS: But the governments will naturally have a tendency to sit on this information. What about the man and woman in the street, aren't they entitled to know about this kind of collaboration, particularly since half a million men and women went to war in the Gulf?

EKEUS: That's my distinct view and I know that it's shared also by IAEA that the UN cannot protect violators of international agreements and voluntary arrangements prohibiting proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, so indeed we have to, at some stage find, a way to disclose information but we must know that this information we get is very tricky to handle, is sketchy, we don't have the relevant documents. We find concrete things but we don't get the surrounding equipment and material.

MENON: Ambassador Ekeus, the Gulf conflict and its aftermath in which you played such a large role has generally been viewed as striking a keynote of the period after the Cold War and it's been generally said that the relations between the North and the South -- between the developed and developing countries -- are going to be critical during this period. How do you see your operation in that light? What are the implications for North/South relations?

EKEUS: I think it can be a very healthy outcome. First of all, what is new in this post Cold War era is the collaboration between the five permanent members of the UN Security Council. That has given the Council the possibility to

act vigorously for the sake of peace. This is a most important component. Secondly, it's remarkable with the Iraqi operation that the Security Council, I think for the first time, recognizes that weapons of mass destruction in themselves constitute a political reality, a security reality, a manifestation of threats against international peace and security. And we feel that the Council from now on will be able more vigorously to address the weapons issue. I can't say they have a very impressive record, on the contrary, in this field.

To come to the North/South component in your question. Just the weapons of mass destruction are the most disturbing component in the North/South and inter-South relationship. These are weapons which can intimidate your neighbour and if your neighbour has it, there is very hard pressure to try to acquire a deterrence capability of some sort, and the risk is that if the Council would be passive in the weapons area, in the area of weapons and weapons destruction, we will go against the destabilizing situation in the South and in the North/South relationship. So we feel that we are now on the right track for the first time.

MENON: Despite the fact that the view from the South is that this whole operation is a team of Northerners essentially disarming or defining a troublesome Southern country, a small developing country, that perception, do you think that will have a lasting effect?

EKEUS: I don't know if this perception is really shared because first of all, this is not a harmless political country -- it's a country on the brink of being a nuclear weapon state, a country with large amounts of chemical weapons. The third largest country in the world obviously and with also potentials

in the missile to deliver them, and also with a rather advanced programme of biological weapons research which I think hardly any country can match. So first of all I don't feel that this is a perception of a weak and innocent country which also takes the opportunity to attack a neighbour. So the perception I doubt, first of all, however, there is an element of high tech in this destruction elimination phase, especially nuclear weapons, where we are bound to stick to expertise from nuclear weapons states because here we have a lot of advanced science in the nuclear weapons construction, engineering techniques and so on, and we have therefore to avoid that, non-nuclear experts and inspectors from non-nuclear weapons states participate in disclosing the Iraqi capabilities, because we don't want to assist the proliferation activities in this field.

LEOPOLD: Ambassador, one of your duties in the Special Commission is long term monitoring and I understand that you recently sent Iraq a questionnaire about so-called dual industries, those industries which could be used for peaceful as well as military purposes. Could you tell us something about the questionnaire, and also whether you ever expect Iraq to answer?

EKEUS: We have, as a part of the plan for future control, indeed requested from Iraq a very detailed declaration with regard to such activities in their civil industry, in the military field, which could be supportive of acquiring, again, weapons of mass destruction. Our idea with that is to base our continued work on these declarations which we hope will be honest and full and if they are, we will be able to effectively monitor that. However, if Iraq does not cooperate on that very important task, we are authorized by the Security Council to find out ourselves, fundamentally with the same means we have established and used with such success so far. So that's our intention, to

go into the chemical industry and see the chemical industry of Iraq, to monitor closely their military activities which are not prohibited but can be, so to say, used for developing prescribed items and the same of course in the biological area.

LITTLEJOHNS: The programme is **WORLD CHRONICLE.** Our guest is Ambassador Rolf Ekeus, Executive Chairman of the Special Commission on Iraqi Weapons.

LEOPOLD: I just want to know when did you send the questionnaire and is there any kind of a deadline for answering?

EKEUS: In a sense, we didn't send the questionnaire because what we did was, there were components in the two plans for future compliance which were approved by the Security Council by the Security Council 11th October and the deadline is now coming very short to that and we are of course in touch with the Iraqi authorities on details in this.

MENKES: Ambassador, I would like to ask you to reflect a little more on the philosophical significance of the process your Commission is in. There are many more countries in the area, apart from Iraq, with quite impressive military machines. Reportedly some have weapons of mass destruction as well. What do you think their leaders should feel now watching your activity? You think they are going to take it as a lesson for themselves or rather think, "Well, it's good it's our mighty neighbour and not us?"

EKEUS: I think everyone should support our activities and really take the experiences to heart. What this activity demonstrates as I said, is first of all that the Council is able to act forcefully in this way which is very important. Secondly

is that the weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear and chemical weapons but also the long range missiles which are means to deliver those weapons, are destabilizing and are future threats to all efforts to create stable peace or at least stable security arrangements in, for instance, the area of the Middle East if you take that as a large entity. And indeed you are aware that such weapons do indeed exist in the area but one that's maybe not a Commission position, but my own position is very clear on this. I feel that the efforts with regard to Iraq are very supportive to the overall efforts to create an area or a zone free from weapons of mass destruction as has been proposed by President Mubarak and also elaborated upon by President Bush. These efforts must be I think linked to, they cannot not be isolated, they have to be linked to the overall political process of land for peace, of establishing a military confidence and security building arrangements or measures but we cannot exclude the weapons of mass destruction. If we do that there will be no stability and there will be little hope for peace. The states there are now aware that the UN has capabilities and in Iraq the UN has demonstrated its willingness, political will, to act on those capabilities.

MENKES: About the inspections. In your recent report you said that there have been 20 of them. Is there any way of defining how many more do we need and how the future inspections will differ from the first ones?

EKEUS: We have covered through these inspections a lot of ground and we have now, I think, a general good picture where we stand in all areas, but there are some serious dark components in the nuclear field. There are things which have not been disclosed to us, which Iraq is still keeping for themselves. Also their sensitive area is an area of ballistic missiles where

we have not so far managed to get numbers to come together but we have information roughly how much Iraq has achieved, how many SCUD missiles have been delivered to Iraq. We have also some ideas about how many have been disposed of during war -- Iran/Iraq conflict, during the Gulf War. We know of course, how many we have destroyed ourselves, and we are working very hard to get this situation to come together. I have told the Iraqi authorities that the solution to the problem, an end to this intrusive inspection phase will come as soon as Iraq collaborates fully with us by giving us the data, and not only data, but proof of the data.

LITTLEJOHNS: Ambassador Ekeus, in view of the tremendous amount of military materiel that you and your inspection teams have uncovered, people may wonder how great a victory was really scored over the Iraqis in the famous "100 Hour War". Is there the possibility or the potential for the Iraqis to rise again and become a threat, not only to the region, but perhaps to the world at large?

EKEUS: I think what we have demonstrated is the effectiveness of arms control and disarmament measures. For instance ...

LITTLEJOHNS: ... but they haven't been effective, evidently?

EKEUS: Well, say that the coalition, according to Iraqi reports, destroyed on the ground something like six SCUD missiles during the whole coalition bombing, the Special Commission has destroyed 62 through ...

LITTLEJOHNS: ... but there are hundreds left, aren't there?

EKEUS: Well, as I indicated, we are still working on those figures and we hope that ... As I said, we have told the Iraqis come forward with the exact details.

LITTLEJOHNS: And if they don't come forward?

EKEUS: We will find them; we will dig them up with the means we have available to us. As you know, they are not weak means. We have considerable sources in our work so we feel that that should be handled reasonably well.

MENON: How are you going to deal with the very talented bunch of scientists, of Iraqi scientists, who are responsible for this, the weapons capability that Iraq has?

EKEUS: Yes, in all these four fields, Iraq has advanced capabilities, scientists, that's true, but even more maybe important are the qualified engineering skill, which is normally the theoretical knowledge, is rather widespread about these weapons, but the task and art of engineering those into real workable things is still a very rare thing. However, Iraq is well equipped with such capabilities. They have scientists, as you say, engineers; they have management skill and we cannot dispose of that. That's why we worked out plans for a future control of Iraq where our control of course, will be concentrated on the hardware component of the material, machinery, weapons, the dual purpose activities, civilian activities which can be translated into weapon activities. And we of course, will try to trace to some degree, the human person, but this is a sensitive area and we prefer to concentrate on the material.

LEOPOLD: The International Atomic Energy Agency has said it has papers, they found papers drawing up a prototype for a bomb,

an atom bomb. Every time another report is released outside experts give estimates of how far Iraq was away from either deploying or manufacturing such a bomb. What is your estimate?

EKEUS: Well, my estimate can only be based upon what I would say "outside experts" but our "inside experts" tell us, and the idea, I guess, is obviously it appears to be a consensus among the experts who are looking closely on the papers that the Iraqi side has the capability to make the trigger package which normally is a very difficult task to pursue. I'm not personally totally convinced but it may be so. They definitely have the blueprints, they have all the papers and all the theoretical knowledge, but engineering is very difficult. But fundamentally, it is considered by the experts that the trigger package is not the time decisive element. It is the amount of weapons-grade uranium, highly enriched uranium and according to that, I think we have very fair, very good understanding. There is a consensus that it would take something ... if the bombing had not stopped it and destroyed the first EMIS facility they had, Iraq would have been within 12 months, 12 to 18 months able to produce enough material for a bomb. And if then the trigger package was ready as some say, then they would have the bomb within 12 to 18 months. They also had enough fresh fuel to continue to produce highly enriched uranium at a steady pace so by the end of the decade if they had not been stopped, Iraq probably would have quite a number of nuclear weapons.

MENKES: Those suppliers of different materials and technology to the Iraqi military, to what extent do they share the responsibility for the Iraqi adventure in Kuwait? What's the point of view of the Commission?

EKEUS: It was well known that Iraq was well equipped with chemical weapons and I don't know to which degree the advanced nuclear programme was known, certainly not to most people I talked to -- they were surprised when they heard about a nuclear weapon programme -- but the access of such capability to make mass destruction is of course, extremely intimidating for the neighbours and as I indicated before, they in themselves create a political situation which has to be taken into account by neighbours and that is influencing the whole political balance in the region. So that's also why I feel it's so important that those weapons and capabilities are eliminated in order to create stability and possibility for peace.

LITTLEJOHNS: Ambassador Ekeus, that's all the time we have. Thank you for joining us on this edition of **WORLD CHRONICLE**. Our guest has been Ambassador Rolf Ekeus, Executive Chairman of the Special Commission on Iraqi Weapons. He was interviewed here at United Nations headquarters in New York by Bhaskar Menon of PTI-TV, India; Evelyn Leopold of Reuters; and Evgueni Menkes of TASS.

I'm Michael Littlejohns. Thank you for joining us. We invite you to be with us for the next edition of **WORLD CHRONICLE**.

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